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CIA's Secret History Loses Its Invisibility

THE INVISIBLE GOVERNMENT. By David Wise and Thomas B. Ross. (375 pages. Random House. \$5.95.)

By Maurice Dolbier

"A full account of America's intelligence and espionage apparatus," says the jacket, but of course the book isn't quite that. It doesn't list the names and present addresses of our agents, and the current status of their operations.

However, it certainly is the most extensive and revealing study of our intelligence and espionage system (and, in particular, of the role played by the CIA) that has ever appeared in print — so extensive and revealing that its appearance has drawn protests from some government, and invisible-governmental quarters.

Its authors are responsible newspapermen—Wise is chief of the New York Herald Tribune's Washington Bureau, Ross is a member of the Washington bureau of the Chicago Sun-Times—and this is their second collaboration on a book intended to inform the American people about matters that they are entitled, but rarely invited, to know. (The first, published in 1962, was "The U-2 Affair," and it didn't inspire any exclamations of joy in official Washington circles.)

Our intelligence network, the authors say, employs about 200,000 persons and spends several billions of dollars a year (the how, where, and why of the spending is neatly and, many will say, necessarily concealed from public, and even from Congressional, view). They quote Allen Dulles (whose authority in these matters is unassailable): "The National Security Act of 1947 . . . has given Intelligence a more influential position in our government than Intelligence enjoys in any other government in the world."

This book describes the conditions under which the invisible government has grown to such mammoth proportions and the conditions (or, at least, some of them) under which it operates today. But most of the material in the book deals with actions in which it has been engaged in many parts of the world—actions some of which have come (usually

through their failure) to fairly widespread public notice: the Cuban invasion, for instance; others that are generally unfamiliar.

There are accounts of the coup that overthrew Iran's weepy Premier Mossadegh and the role he played, as a CIA agent, by a grandson of President Theodore Roosevelt; the "banana revolt" in Guatemala; the CIA support for the rebels who sought to overthrow Indonesia's Sukarno; the CIA's triumph in securing the secret speech of Khrushchev attacking Stalinism at the 20th Communist party congress; the activities of CIA agents in Burma and Laos and Vietnam.

They describe in some detail a matter almost completely unfamiliar to the American public: the activities of the CIA in the U. S. itself. They open to general knowledge a subject that is "little known outside the Government, and is almost never talked about—the uneasiness felt in other Government agencies over the role of the CIA"—and illustrate this with Sargent Shriver's successful attempt to "divorce the Peace Corps from even the faintest smell of intelligence work."

The dangers to democracy of the power and quasi-independent status of such an invisible government are obvious; so are the dangers of weakening or over-exposing our intelligence agencies and methods.

The authors suggest that the public, the President and the Congress must support steps to control the intelligence establishment, to place checks on its power and to make it truly accountable — which raises other questions: Whose steps? What steps? Whose control? Would there, one wonders, have been much public and Congressional protestation or executive discomfort, at the CIA's role in the Bay of Pigs affair if the invasion had been successful?

No perfect solutions to the problem may be possible, but to make the problem and its many ramifications a matter for public knowledge and discussion must continue to be the duty of good (and, to officialdom, good and annoyingly inquisitive) newsmen like Wise and Ross.